



# GILLES DELEUZE

## *Kant: Synthesis and Time*

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Why wouldn't there also be a synthesised or electronic way of handling philosophy?

Last time I tried to determine a certain number of very precise Kantian notions: a priori, synthesis, etc... but very much as a function of what seemed the essential thing to me, namely a radical reversal in the position of the problem of time in relation to philosophy. It's a critical reversal, like a critical point.

I proposed last time that we take as three arbitrary formulae, but it's very dangerous, but never mind there are three key formulae that aren't Kant's but under which, it seems to me, the three great novelties or the three great reversals that Kant operates on the notion of time group themselves.

So if we can manage to eliminate everything that is facile in this evocation of literary formulae in relation to a conceptual study of philosophy, the first formula to which Kant would give a powerful content is that of Hamlet: the time is out of joint. The second formula is anonymous and would be something like this: till now the task we have given ourselves was to represent space, the moment has come to think time. Third famous formula, given by an author who had nothing to do with Kant: "I is an other". I believe that if we separate these expressions from their contexts, they suit Kant admirably, if you take them as abstract declarations. Maybe that will allow me to understand in itself the formula "I is an other", as well as to understand in itself the formula "the time is out of joint".

I have asked Gilles Châtelet to bring a contribution to the commentary of this first formula. So I'm taking us back to the level of the first formula "the time is out of joint", how is it that Kant's philosophy posits a time which is in the process of getting out of joint. The joint was this sort of pivot around which time turned, in other words, in a certain tradition of antiquity, time is fundamentally subordinated to something which happens in it, and this something can be determined as being change, the subordination of time to change, time will thus measure the changing of what changes, or else, which amounts to the same thing on another level, it will be subordinated to movement, the subordination of time to movement, I say that that amounts to the same thing on another level because movement qua local movement is the purest form of change, which is to say the perfect form of change; that goes back to things in Aristotle and which cover the whole of Greek philosophy. Or else, which again amounts to the same thing on another level, subordination of time to the course of the world, and it's in this sense that the classical definition of the Greeks appears: time is the number of movement. What does that imply?

That implies a subordination of time to change, to movement, to the course of the world. That implies that time is as if bent, it becomes circular. It is a time, independent or not of



questions of the eternal return which are posed in a completely different manner, time is cyclical. And indeed, to the extent that it is the number of movement, it will measure the movement of the planets - see all of Plato's prose writings on the eight movements of the eight planets - and the great circle that will measure the time it takes for the eight planets to come back to the same respective position, the eight circles of the world, you would have thus a great circle of circles whose point would be assigned by the planet's return to the same respective position, you would have the world's year. But this time become circular is but one with time subordinated to change, to movement, and to the course of the world, and it's the great idea which runs through all of ancient philosophy: time as the image of eternity. The circle of time, in so far as it measures planetary movement, and the return of the same, it's precisely this time become circular. In the *Timaeus* there were some very beautiful pages on the arc of the Demiurge which makes circles, this bending activity.

However, this time as an image of eternity, the cyclical figure of time subordinated to movement and whose secret will be the periodic return of planets to the same position relative to each other, is indeed a time which is the image of eternity. I would say that all of the time of antiquity is marked by a modal character, and in effect the word appears all the time: time is a mode and not a being. No more than number is a being, it's a mode in relation to what it quantifies, in the same way time is a mode in relation to what it measures.

Obviously, it's not a matter of just taking Kant like that, it doesn't happen only in his head, there's a very long scientific evolution which find its philosophical expression there, but it had already found, no doubt with Newton, a scientific expression. Everything happens as if time "deployed itself" [se déployait], but we must take "deployed itself" in its strict sense, which is to say unrolled itself, which is to say lost its cyclical form. What does that mean that time becomes a pure straight line. It's exactly as if you were holding a coiled spring and you let it go.

Time becomes a pure straight line. It reminds me of Borges, the true labyrinth is the straight line. When time becomes a straight line, what does that mean and what change does that imply?

Still speaking musically, I would say that with Kant time acquires a tonal character, it ceases to be modal. We can find no other images to indicate the violence of such an operation in relation to the thought that, truly, the circle snaps, like a spring that uncoils itself, which becomes a pure straight line. You can see that the cyclical line, when time is cyclical, is a line which limits [borne] the world and just saying that time becomes a straight line means that it no longer limits the world, it will traverse it. In the first case, cyclical time is a time which limits and which thus carries out - which has always been the supreme act for the Greeks - carries out the act of limitation. When time becomes a straight line, it no longer limits the world, it traverses it, it is no longer a limit in the sense of limitation, it is limit in the sense: it's at the extremity [bout], it never ceases to be at the extremity, it's the sense of a passage to the limit. The same word "limit" radically changes in sense, it's no longer the operation which limits something, it's on the contrary the term towards which something tends, and at the same time the tendency and that towards which it tends, that's time. How can we explain that. It's precisely a matter of assigning the importance of this time become straight line. It's not a simplification, it changes everything in the very atmosphere of time and in the operation of time.

The simplest way is to refer ourselves to a poet who claims to be inspired by Kant. That's Hölderlin. For the moment our problem is solely to say what is the importance of the change when time ceases to be circular, ceases to be a circle in order to become a straight line. We must keep in mind both that Hölderlin claims to be inspired by Kant and that he has many things to say on what happens when time becomes a straight line.



Hölderlin poses the problem at the level of Greek tragedy, and in particular he opposes Greek tragedy such as it appeared in Aeschylus and Greek tragedy such as it appeared in Sophocles, and above all in Oedipus and in Antigone. You will see straight away that the schema that Hölderlin develops, and that other commentators of Sophocles took up afterwards, concerns the very heart of our problem. It amounts to telling us that there is a certain sense of the tragic for the Greeks which is the tragic element of cyclical time. We find it very easily in Aeschylus. What is the tragic cycle of time? The tragic cycle of time is, broadly, like three unequal arcs of a circle; there is the moment of limitation; limitation is nothing other than justice, it's the lot assigned to each. And then there is the transgression of the limitation, the act which transgresses.

The moment of the limit is the great Agamemnon, it's the beauty of royal limitation. Then there is the transgression of the limit, which is to say the excessive act [l'acte de la démesure]: it's Clytemnestra assassinating Agamemnon. Then there is the long atonement, and the tragic cycle of time is the cycle of limitation, of transgression and of atonement. The atonement is Orestes who will avenge Agamemnon. There will be the re-establishment of the equilibrium of the limit which for a moment was overstepped. Notice that this tragic time is modeled on astronomical time since in astronomical time you have the sphere of fixed points which is precisely the sphere of perfect limitation, you have the planets and the movements of the planets which, in a certain way, break through the limit, then you have the atonement, which is to say the re-establishment of justice since the planets find themselves in the same position again.

And in this formula of the famous tragic destiny, as they say, it's settled from the beginning, and when the tragedy begins it's already done: as Aeschylus' text itself says, at the moment when Agamemnon goes into his palace and is about to be assassinated by Clytemnestra, it's already done. But at the moment when Clytemnestra assassinates him, an act of excess and injustice, of violation of the limit, the atonement is already there. It's this sort of cyclical destiny. Time is a curve.

Whereas in some splendid pages, Hölderlin says: what is the novelty of Sophocles? In what respect does Sophocles found in the end the modern sense of the tragic? He is the first to un-curve [*décourber*] time. It's the time of Oedipus. He says that before Sophocles, in the Greek sense of the tragic, it's man who eludes the limit. You can see, in the limitation-limit, man transgresses the limit and in so doing eludes the limit; but with Oedipus one can no longer say that it has the atmosphere of someone who transgresses the limit, who eludes the limit. In the case of Oedipus, it's the limit which is elusive. Where is it? It's the limit which becomes passage to the limit. Splendid expression of Hölderlin's: in Oedipus, the beginning and the end no longer rhyme. And the rhyme is precisely the arc of the time bending in such a way that beginning and end rhyme with each other. There was atonement for the injustice. In Oedipus time has become a straight line which will be the line on which Oedipus wanders. The long wandering of Oedipus. There will no longer be any atonement, even if only in the form of a brutal death. Oedipus is in perpetual suspension, he will travel his straight line of time. In other words, he is traversed by a straight line which drags him along. Towards what? Nothing. Heidegger will be able to say later that it's towards death. Heidegger for his part will draw from the straight line the idea, which is not wholly un-Kantian, the idea of a sort of being-towards-death.

We can see well indeed that in the case of Oedipus, in Sophocles' tragedy, the beginning and the end do not rhyme, and moreover there is a zero-instant. Hölderlin adds that this un-curved time, such that the beginning and the end no longer rhyme together, and it's precisely because there is a caesura in this time, thus a pure present, that there will be - and it's this caesura that will distribute it - a before and an after, and it's this before and this after which



do not rhyme. For the schema of cyclical time is substituted a time as straight line, marked by a caesura, a caesura which distributes a non-symmetrical before and after. It's very important for us for time as a straight line contains the possibility of distributing a non-symmetrical before and after, of producing a non-symmetrical before and after using a caesura. We can call this caesura the pure present. Hölderlin's analysis is admirable however because he tries to show that this form of time, the caesura which distributes a before and an after, thus the linear form of this time marked by a pure present according to which a past and a future are produced in time, well this time is that of the modern consciousness in opposition to the consciousness of antiquity.

Since I borrowed the formula from Hamlet, what strikes me, independently of dates, is the extent to which the whole schema that Hölderlin constructs for us to understand what he considers to be the novelty of Oedipus, the extent to which that applies to Hamlet. For those who remember Hamlet, it's curious the extent to which it's a linear time where something is always elusive, it is no longer Hamlet who eludes the limit, it's the limit which eludes Hamlet, as if it was spinning the straight line. And there is a caesura. For Oedipus, Hölderlin assigns the moment of the caesura to the intervention of Tiresias, the intervention of the seer. It will constitute the pure instant, the pure present from which a past and a future will be produced on the straight line, which is to say a before and an after which no longer rhyme together. And in Hamlet there is a moment which seems extraordinary to me: Hamlet hesitates a great deal in his task of avenging his father: the limit is literally elusive. When he hesitates a great deal to avenge his father it's the same story as Oedipus. For a long time it's as if it's the time before, but we can't yet say "before" since the before and after are only distributed by the caesura which is to say the moment of the pure present; and then his step-father, who wants to get rid of him, sends him on a sea trip. Well the sea trip is so fundamental that Hamlet returns from it saying: "there is something dangerous in me", which he would never have said before, as if the sea trip had made him capable of something which he was not capable of before. The sea trip has played the function of the caesura and has distributed on the straight line of time a before and an after which are non-coincident, non-symmetrical.

We will see all that in this quite beautiful, obscure but beautiful text of Hölderlin's: "At the extreme limit of the rift nothing in fact remains any more except the conditions of time or of space [here Hölderlin is speaking like a Kantian]. At this limit man forgets himself because he is wholly inside the moment. God forgets because he is nothing but time. And there is infidelity on both sides, etc." The categorical turning-away [détournement], what is it? It's that in so far as time is cyclical, there is a sort of God-man relationship which is one with destiny in Greek tragedy. When time becomes a straight line, there is also something which separates. In Hölderlin's very beautiful commentary it's the double deviation in the same course of linear time which will separate man and God, God turns away from man who turns away from God. Which is why Oedipus is said by Sophocles to be "atheos", which does not mean atheist, but he who is separated from God. So much so that God is no longer the master of time, the one who curves time, and man is longer himself???? encircled in a sort of harmony with God, in this sort of relationship with God, man is no longer anything but the caesura which prevents the before and after from rhyming together, which distributes a before and an after which do not rhyme together.

I would simply like you to begin to feel the importance of this time which becomes a straight line. It doesn't mean simplification of the figure of time at all, on the contrary I would like you to feel an intense complication of the figure of time. Time is no longer subordinated to something which happens in it, on the contrary it's everything else which is subordinated to time. God himself is no longer anything but empty time. Man is no longer anything but a caesura in time. In *The Critique of Pure Reason*, there is a very famous passage, also very very



beautiful, which is called “Anticipations of Perception”. I would just like to show that, at a completely different level, Kant tells us a story which is the same one that Hölderlin told afterwards. But it’s not in relation to Greek tragedy. Oddly enough it happens to be in relation to scientific physics. So there are twelve extraordinary pages entitled “Anticipations of Perception”. Kant tells us that space and time are what are called extensive magnitudes. What does extensive magnitude mean? It’s not complicated, in Latin an extensive magnitude is one which accepts the formula “partes extra partes”, the exteriority of parts, which is to say an extensive magnitude is one whose parts are apprehended successively so that, all quantity being at the same time multiplicity and unity - when you say, for example, this is twenty metres long, it’s the unity of a multiplicity - extensible magnitude or extensive magnitude will be defined in the following way: the multiplicity refers to a gathering of parts into a whole. That’s an extensive quantity. But time is like that: a minute, another minute, and then you say that’s it, that an hour has passed. You can see the succession of parts in their apprehension, the gathering into a whole: an hour.

Space and time are extensive quantities, no difficulty there. Kant adds: but there you have it, the real in space and time - you recall that the real in space and time is what appears in space and time, it’s the phenomenon since with Kant the phenomenon is no longer an appearance, it’s the fact of appearing - the real in so far as it appears in space and time, no doubt it also has an extensive quantity, there is the space of the table. There’s no more to go over on this point; it’s precisely what Kant calls a synthesis. But the real in space and in time doesn’t only have an extensive quantity, it also has an intensive quantity. What is an intensive quantity? It’s what fills space and time to such or such a degree.

We can see straight away the difference between extensive quantity and intensive quantity since the same extensive space can be filled to varying degrees. An example: the same space can be filled by a more or less intense red, the same room can be filled with a more or less intense heat, the same volume can be filled with a more or less dense matter. Kant will even distinguish the two questions fundamentally: can emptiness in space and time be conceived, and another question, namely that space and time can be filled without there being any void in them, can be filled varying degrees.

So what is the intensive quantity of the real in so far as it fills space and time? Moreover, there is not just a real which fills space and time, there is a real of space and time, it’s intensive quantity. In opposition to what we have just said about extensive quantity, the two fundamental characteristics of intensive quantity according to Kant - and this will be very important for all subsequent theories of intensity - first characteristic: the apprehension of an intensive quantity is instantaneous, which is to say that its unity no longer comes from the sum of its successive parts, the unity of a given intensive quantity is apprehended in an instant. Which amounts to saying that when I say “it’s 30 degrees”, the 30-degree heat is not the sum of three times ten degrees, it’s at the level of extensive quantities that thirty is  $10+10+10$ , but thirty degrees is not three 10-degree heats. In other words, the rules of addition and subtraction are not valid for intensive quantities. The apprehension of the unity of an intensive quantity happens in an instant. Second characteristic: the multiplicity contained in an intensive quantity is no longer referred to a succession of parts exterior to each other, but refers to a variable proximity to degree zero. I can say that each time there is something which fills space and time, I would say or rather Kant would say that he has before him an empirical intuition. Intuition, you will recall, is the faculty of receiving what is given, but the given is given in space and time, so intuition is not at all a magical faculty, it’s the faculty of receptivity. I receive something which is given, and in this sense I have an empirical intuition. But to the extent that what is given has an intensive quantity, which is to say a degree, I grasp it in a relation to its production starting from zero, or its extinction... or the real which fills space and time from



the point of view of its intensive quantity is grasped as produced starting from degree zero or as extinguishing itself, i.e., rejoining degree zero.

At that point the question is not at all one of knowing if there is an empty space and time, the question is of knowing that in any case there is an empty consciousness of space and time. And there is an empty consciousness of space and of time as consciousness determined by and as a function of degree zero as the principle of production of all reality in space and time - production starting from zero or the principle of extinction.

I don't want to make associations that are too forced, but at the physical level of intensity in Kant, you can do what Hölderlin ?????, namely the straight line of time marked by a caesura which is intuition = 0; what he will call the empty formal intuition, from which the real which fills space and time will be produced, and it's this intuition = 0, this empty intuition which constitutes the caesura. It's according to this caesura, this degree zero implied by all intensive quantity, which is naturally correlated with time as empty form, as pure line. So on time as a pure line the caesura of degree zero is marked, which will mean that before and after will no longer rhyme together. Again the question is not: is there an empty time and space, the question is whether there is an empty consciousness of time, by virtue of the nature of time itself. In other words God has become time, at the same time that man became caesura. It's hard, we understand nothing, but it's beautiful. That's all I wanted to say on time that's out of joint.

Intensive quantity effects a synthesis between the degree zero that it implies, from which it is produced, and time as pure line or empty form. Intensive quantity as degree of the real which fills a space and a time effects the synthesis between a degree zero from which this real is produced or in which it extinguishes itself, and on the other hand time as empty form or pure line. So much so that there will be a complementarity between the function of the caesura which intensive consciousness plays in time and the empty linear form that time takes on. Hence, as Hölderlin will say: man (the consciousness of time) is no more than a caesura, God is no more than empty time. It's the double turning-away [détournement]. Kant didn't go as far as that, for a simple reason that I will explain: in effect Kant subtracted God and the soul from knowledge. He gave them a function in the field of knowledge, but God and the soul were not known as such since we only know phenomena, we only know what appears. But he didn't suppress either God or the soul since he was to give them a quite different function, a moral, practical function. But from the point of view of knowledge, Gods passes into empty time just as the soul passes into the caesura.

Is that any better? True lived experience [le vécu] is an absolutely abstract thing. The abstract is lived experience. I would almost say that once you have reached lived experience, you reach the most fully living core of the abstract. In other words, lived experience represents nothing. And you can live nothing but the abstract and nobody has ever lived anything else but the abstract. I don't live representation in my heart, I live a temporal line which is completely abstract. What is more abstract than a rhythm?

For the Stoics, they are at once so new in relation to antiquity, and at the same time they have nothing to do with it, they employ "limit" in a wholly different sense. The limit for them is no longer the limit assumed by philosophers of the Platonic type, neither is it the other limit... Kant's ?Anticipations of Perception? means something very simple, which is that you can't say anything about perception, a priori, if there is a colour that is called red and another that is called green, that's to do with the given, you cannot say it independently of experience, it's given in experience. There are two things that you can say a priori, which are: whatever there is that is given in space and time, what is given in space and time is an extensive quantity, but also has a degree, which is to say an intensive quantity. That is an a priori judgement. Which is to say nothing would come and fill space and time as extensive quantities if what



comes to fill them did not also have a degree. So I anticipate perception since in this I have a determination, it's the only a priori thing I can say. So there is anticipation. With Epicurus it's not at all in this sense. The Epicurean definition of time will not even be the novelty of a Stoic form of time, it's typically modal time. Here I would very much like Gilles Châtelet to come in and say, from his rather mathematical point of view, precisely how this conception of time as straight line is fundamental.

Gilles Châtelet (summarised because the taped recording is inaudible): With Plato there is a time which is created, which is to say there is a transcendence somewhere which is above time and which has, in correlation with this, a higher dimension. This time of Plato's measures periods, it's a set of periods and it assures the repetition of identities in the stars, the calendar. The fundamental thing to retain is that time is a number. This time above the market measures order. Time in Plato describes order, chaos has no time for example. Time is a sort of calendar that expresses the order of the world: it's a system of coordinates of order, it is in the world, it's a worldly being.

In Aristotle everything is set out through movement and time is in movement, it is interior to mass. Time is attached to the body. Time will be purely astrological, but we owe to Aristotle the notion of an eternal, infinite and uniform time. But with Plato and Aristotle we have a cyclical representation.

In Plotinus there is an abstract operator which is called the One, which is without any qualification and something degrades once we leave the One. Certainly time measures degradation in relation to eternity. Plotinus says that time is the irreparable addition of being to itself. Time is a fall, i.e. a degradation, and Plotinus speaks of aspiring towards God. The mathematical figure which would go with what Plotinus says is called a projective straight line, time is a straight line, but a straight line which has been curved. It's not a circle either. It's a circle minus one point (the One). Time in Plotinus would be a sort of projective time, there is already the idea of irreversibility. In Plotinus time flows from the One and the One is transcendent to time. Time is not exactly a cosmic being, it's the soul which appreciates time in so far... Time is already an equivalent of eternity, it has neither beginning nor end and the point outside the circle is not in time, the One is above, we never begin. It's rather paradoxical. In Kant time becomes a condition of possibility of phenomena. The succession of phenomena implies time, so it is time which is transcendent. Time is what is called a multiplicity, it's clearly said, it is uni-dimensional and above all it is ordered. In the end he says that it tends towards a straight line. But what is a straight line?... Time as a parameter gives the trajectory... The real straight line is a function, time becomes the condition of a function; it's not the image of representation, it's the function itself. There is the possibility of having a function of time. In what sense is Kant completely modern? Because temporality is defining a topology... a straight one... But Kant's essential idea is that his abstract space is pure parameter.

There are two things in Kant: firstly a technological revolution in the sense that it is clearly affirmed that time is a real straight line, but there is also a notion of function.

Gilles Deleuze: You're saying something very important, namely that with Kant time ceases to be a number or measure and becomes parameter. I would like you to explain the difference between a number or measure and a parameter?

G. Châtelet: The parameter is not a result. A number, for the Greeks, is simply a measure, here the measure of time is possible because... In mathematics parameter has no definition, it's simply a notion. Time become parameter is no longer a result, it becomes an initial given. A parameter is what is given, what varies.



Deleuze: I think that it amounts to exactly the same thing: to say that time ceases to be a number or that time ceases to measure something and thus is subordinated to what it measures, and that time becomes a parameter, time is related to a problem of constitution. When I said that time un-curves itself, becomes a straight line... There is something equivalent in this modern conception of time where it is at the same time that an empty form of parametric time appears and a complementarity with something which makes a function, whether it is the caesura in the tragedy, or else the cut in mathematical instrumentation. I am just a bit bothered by the key role that Gilles Châtelet gives to Plotinus. In antiquity it is much more complicated than has been said till now. There were in fact two directions and the two directions had at least something in common: in the two directions time only has a modal character and never a ???? character. However the two directions are time as number of movement, thus subordinated to the physical cosmos, subordinated to physis, and then Plotinus breaks away there, but he is not the first to break away, and he makes a conception of time which is subordinated not to physis but to the soul. I wouldn't completely agree with Gilles Châtelet on the importance of this point, of Plotinus, and on the one hand the two attempts: time subordinated to the soul, time subordinated to physis maintain or at least have in common the affirmation of a purely and uniquely modal character of time, thus time as the image of eternity, a secondary and derived character of time, and the two have a point of convergence in the Antique theory of the soul of the world. I would not make of Plotinus a...

Comtesse: [inaudible comment]

Gilles: Transcendent in relation to Kant. Once again there are two notions. The Kantian notion is transcendental, time is transcendental, but the whole Kantian notion of the transcendental is created in order to refute the classical notion of the transcendent. The transcendental is above all not transcendent.

I would like to move very quickly to the second point. I'm going very quickly. I would say that the second formula that I would like to apply to Kant is... but thinking time is really the most difficult thing - it's the phase of philosophy as critical philosophy, as modern philosophy defined by Kant under the form of a critical philosophy. In classical philosophy, what is the other of thought. The other of thought is above all space. It's space. Space is conceived as limitation. It was conceived as an obstacle and a resistance, it is also limitation. Why? Because it happens that my thought is referred to a thinking substance that is itself unextended, thought is the attribute of a thinking substance that is itself unextended, but this thinking substance is finite in body. It is finite in body: it's the famous problem which will poison classical philosophy, namely the union of the soul as thinking substance and the body as extended substance. And the fact that the soul is finite in body, even though the soul is in itself unextended (you can see that it's an inextricable problem: how is it that something unextended can be finite in something extended, it will produce all sorts of paradoxes), this in fact introduces a fundamental limitation of thought since it will be the source of all the errors, of all the illusions which not only create an obstacle to thought, but limit thought. Third characteristic: if space is the other of thought, I'm saying that it's an other of, literally, alterity. Extended substance is other than thinking substance even though it is uni-substantially opposed, hence the well-known position of Descartes in which there were three substances: thinking substance, extended substance and the union of thinking substance and extended substance. With the Kantian transformation the aspect of everything changes. Why? We remember time become straight line, and I can no longer say that what is important is space as obstacle or resistance to thought, or as limitation of thought. Here it's time which ceases to



be subordinated to space, it takes on an independence at the same time that it acquires this form that we have seen, this pure form, and it's not time which takes the place of space, it is not an obstacle to thought, it is the limit which works thought from the inside. For the notion of external limitation is substituted the notion of internal limit. Time is the limit which works thought over, which traverses thought through and through, it is the inherent limit, a limit interior to thought, whereas in classical philosophy it's space which is determined as the exterior limitation of thought.

So everything happens as if the "enemy" of thought was within. It does not receive it from outside. There we have a sort of fundamental change. To think time means to substitute for the classical schema of an exterior limitation of thought by the extended, the very very strange idea of an interior limit to thought which works it from the inside, which doesn't at all come from outside, which doesn't at all come from the opacity of a substance. As if there was in thought something impossible to think. As if thought was worked over from the inside by something that it cannot think. From this point the problem, in Kant, will no longer be that of the union of the soul and the body, which is to say the union of two substances one of which is extended and the other unextended. The problem will no longer be the union of two distinct substances, it will be the coexistence and the synthesis of two forms (they're completely different, two forms and two substances) of one and the same subject. Instead of the union of two substances, the synthesis of two forms of the same subject, which implies that the subject is not substance.

What are these two forms which will have to unite - I can no longer even say in the same subject since substance will not be inherent in the subject - they are two forms for the same subject. Now this subject will be traversed by this line of time; the subject is as if traversed by two forms and is himself nothing other than the synthesis, namely the most mysterious point, the synthesis of these two forms. What are these two forms? They're on the one hand the form of thought, and on the other hand the form of the internal limit of thought. What does that mean in concrete terms? The form of thought is in the first place the act of "I think", the "I think" as act or as determination. To say "I think" is to determine something. What? We will see later.

The form of equal thought, in the most universal sense "I think" which is to say that it's thought in so far as it is related to a subject; but I don't have the right to say that it's a substance. Second determination of the form of thought: as Kant says, "I think" is the slightest [la plus pauvre] of representations, it's the slightest of thoughts which accompanies all thoughts. Self = self, it's the "I" of "I think". The "I think" is the universal form of determination, but in a sense I determine nothing and in "I think" the determination is at its emptiest.

Concretely acts of thought are concepts. We have seen that a priori acts of thought are particular concepts called categories. So the form of thought is the "I think" and the categories taken together, the "I think" together with what it is that "I think", namely the categories or the predicates of any given object. These are what the forms of thought are. Kant will also use the term ?forms of spontaneity?, when "I think" is the act of determination and that implies an activity which is the activity of thought. Kant will reserve the word ?spontaneity? to qualify the form of thought in these two cases. But what else is there besides these two forms of thought? We have seen the form of receptivity or the form of intuition. In the form of intuition we also have two things, just as a moment ago we saw that the form of thought is the self, the "I" of "I think" and it's also the concept as act of thought, the a priori concepts, which is to say the categories, the forms of receptivity are space and time.

There are two forms twice. Last time I said that space is the form of exteriority, time is the form of interiority, this doesn't prevent these two forms from having in common the fact of being two forms of intuition or two forms of receptivity. The form of receptivity is double:



form of exteriority = space, form of interiority = time, but the two together are the form of receptivity. On the other hand there is the form of spontaneity which is the “I think” and the categories. You can see, and this is very important, how it unfolds: you have a first great duality: form of intuition and form of spontaneity, form of receptivity and form of spontaneity, and each one of these two great forms has two aspects. The form of receptivity has two aspects: exteriority-space, interiority-time, the form of spontaneity has two aspects: the self of the “I think”, the I = I, and the concepts that I think, the a priori concepts.

Kant’s problem is how the same subject, or self, can have two forms which are irreducible to each other (irreducibility of space and time on the one hand, and of the concept on the other hand), how = the same subject can have two forms, principally the form of time and the form of thought, and that according to the form of time, it is receptive, it is accepted, and according to the form of thought it is spontaneous, it is determining, it effects determinations. It is no longer at all a matter of knowing how the soul is united to the body, the answer to the union of the soul and the body will evidently follow from the problem reworked in this way, namely the synthesis of the two irreducible forms of the same subject, or for a subject. Which amounts to saying that for the same subject there is the form of spontaneity of thinking and the form of receptivity of time.

It is by virtue of this that time is already the author of thought. And the Kantian synthesis is obvious: the synthesis is something which separates or rends and this sort of Kantian self is rent by these two forms which traverse it and which are completely irreducible to each other. So where does the harmony come from, how can this limping subject function, he who can think nothing without what he thinks having a correlate in space and time, who finds nothing in space and time without it having a correlate in thought, and yet space and time and thought are two absolutely heterogeneous forms. It’s literally a subject who is fundamentally split, it is traversed by a sort of line which is precisely the line of time. So much so that I would say, as a third point, that in classical philosophy the other of thought was the other of alterity; with Kant something absolutely new begins: the other within thought. It’s an other of alienation. Of course Kant does not use this word, but the post-Kantians will produce a fundamental theory of alienation which will be revealed in its most perfect state in Hegel.

The difference between the other of alterity, which is really an exterior other which creates an obstacle for thought, it is the other of alienation which is this interior limit.

What is this alienation? The alienation of the subject in Kant is precisely this fact that it is as if torn by the duality of the two forms, each of which belongs to it as much as the other, form of receptivity and form of spontaneity. Suddenly we are on the verge of understanding what Rimbaud’s formula “I is an other” could mean. “I is an other” is in the first place a formula of Rimbaud’s, it’s in the letters. It’s the most classical context possible, it is purely Aristotelian for the two times Rimbaud comments on the expression “I is an other”, he issues this formula with an extremely classical philosophy as its philosophical support. It is obvious that Rimbaud had a teacher who gave him a course on Aristotle. It’s letter II in the *Pléiade* edition, 1971: “I is an other. Too bad for the wood which finds itself a violin.” Letter to Paul Dominique: “For I is an other. If the tiger awakens... I witness the hatching of my thought, I watch it, I study it.”

Aristotle tells us that there is matter and then there is form which informs [informe] matter. Matter is the copper, the bugle is the copper which has been poured into this form. Nothing could be more classical, and Rimbaud assimilates himself to a matter and says: thought forms me. In the other example, the wood becomes violin, it is given the form of the violin and it receives its capacities.



Rimbaud draws from this the formula “I is an other” which obviously exceeds the context. His business is to find the poem, the appropriate poetic act. It’s Kant who will do the philosophical work which corresponds to the formula “I is an other”.

We must at all costs, for Kant makes reference to this, without even saying it, we must start from the cogito in Descartes. Obviously I would like to spare you a lesson on Descartes, but everything comes from this formula: “I think therefore I am”, I am a thing that thinks. That is the Cartesian development exactly, but it is summarised as “I think therefore I am”. But the complete formula is “I think therefore I am”, it being understood that in order to think it is necessary to be, what am I? I am a thing that thinks. You can see the progression: I think, I am, I am a thing which thinks. I think = determination. ?I am? is the position of something indeterminate; I am a thing which thinks, the thing qua determined. Follow me, there are three terms: a determination, I think; a thing to determine, namely an existence or a being; thirdly the determined, namely the thinkable thing.

The determination determines something to be determined. You will tell me that if that’s all there is, that doesn’t go very far. I have indeed three things then: I think, I am, I am a thing that thinks. The “I think” determines the “I am” as a thing that thinks. At first glance that seems to be impeccable. And now Kant comes along and says: not at all, he has forgotten a term, it’s not at all complicated enough. And Kant will correct, he says, OK, I think = determination - and here we are fully in the future of German philosophy - in order to think it is necessary to be, OK, so the determination implies something indeterminate which is to be determined by the determination. I need this complicated formula for a very simple thing. You can see, I think therefore I am, it’s quite simple, I think is a determination, the determination implies something indeterminate which is precisely to be determined by the determination. So, I think, I am, that works. At that point he makes a cut, a caesura: he says: I think therefore I am, very well, but you cannot conclude from this “I am a thing that thinks”. Kant saw a flaw there in what the other believed to be a sort of continuity that nobody could refuse him.

Why does it go from “I think” to “I am”? Once again, OK, the determination implies something indeterminate to be determined by the determination. But, Kant says, that doesn’t yet tell us the form, under what form the indeterminate (which is to say the I think) is determinable by the determination.

... The determination, the indeterminate existence, the existence determined by the determination, and Descartes thought he had a continuum of thought. The determination was the “I think”, the indeterminate existence was the “I am”, the determination determined the indeterminate: I am a thing which thinks. Kant says: I think = determination, I am = indeterminate existence implied by the I think; in order for there to be a determination there must indeed be something to be determined. But now, we still must be told under what form the indeterminate, the to-be-determined, what must be determined, we still must be told under what form the indeterminate existence is determinable by the determination. Descartes has only forgotten one thing, namely to define the form of the determinable. So there were not three terms, the determination, the indeterminate and the determined, there were four terms: the determination, the indeterminate, the determinable form and the determined.

If you understand that you have understood everything because you have Kant’s reply. Under what form is the indeterminate existence such as it is implied by the I think, under what form is it determined?

The “I think” is a determination, which is to say a spontaneous act. It implies an “I think”, but a completely indeterminate “I think”. Descartes told us: well yes it’s completely indeterminate, but what difference does that make? Since the determination “I think” is enough to determine its determinate, “I am a thing that thinks”... What he has forgotten is



that “I think” is a determination which implies something indeterminate, but also that does not tell us under what form the “I am” is determinable by the determination “I think”.

Kant’s reply: the form under which the “I am” is determinable is obviously the form of time. It will be the form of time; and you will come across this paradox that Kant will himself define in an admirable formula: the paradox of inner sense, the paradox of interior sense, namely the active determination “I think” determines my existence, the active determination “I think” actively determines my existence, but it can only determine my existence under the form of the determinable, which is to say under the form of a passive being in space and in time. So “I” is indeed an act, but an act that I can only represent to myself in so far as I am a passive being. I is an other. Thus I is transcendental.

In other words, the active determination of the “I think” can only determine my existence under the form of existence of a passive being in space and in time. Which amounts to saying that it’s the same subject which has taken on two forms, the form of time and the form of thought, and the form of thought can only determine the existence of the subject as the existence of a passive being.